

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 to 3: (canceled).

4 (currently amended): A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, [[is]] characterized by:

- (a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal, and
- (b) the width of the weld metal is not more than 70% of the plate thickness of the base metal.

Claim 5: (canceled).

6 (currently amended): A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, [[is]] characterized by:

- (a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal,
- (b) the width of the weld metal is not more than 70% of the plate thickness of the base metal, and
- (c) the width of the region affected by welding whose hardness is softened to not more than 95% of the hardness of the base metal unaffected by heat has a width not less than 5 mm.

Claim 7: (canceled).

8 (currently amended): A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, [[is]] characterized by:

- (a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal,
- (b) the width of the region affected by welding whose hardness is softened to not more than 95% of the hardness of the base metal unaffected by heat has a width not less than 5 mm, and
- (c) the prior austenite grain size in the heat-affected zone (HAZ) contacting the welding fusion line is not more than 200 μm .

Claim 9: (canceled).

10 (currently amended): A large-heat-input butt-welded joint of welded structures prepared by butt-welding high strength steel plates over 50 mm in thickness, having excellent brittle fracture resistance, [[is]] characterized by:

- (a) the hardness of the weld metal is not less than 70% and not more than 110% of the hardness of the base metal,
- (b) the width of the weld metal is not more than 70% of the plate thickness of the base metal,
- (c) the width of the region affected by welding whose hardness is softened to not more than 95% of the hardness of the non-heat-affected base metal has a width not less than 5 mm, and
- (d) the prior austenite grain size in the heat-affected zone (HAZ) contacting the welding fusion line is not more than 200 μm .

11-12: (canceled).